

## ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE <sup>1</sup>

CATALOGUE OF BIRDS OF THE AMERICAS AND THE ADJACENT ISLANDS. By Charles E. Hellmayr and Boardman Conover. Field Museum of Natural History, Zool. Series, 13, part 1, number 1: vi + 636 pp. April 30, 1942. \$5.09 postpaid.

After some unavoidable delay this keenly anticipated volume of the "Catalogue" by Hellmayr and Conover has appeared, and that it fully lives up to the standard set by previous parts goes without saying. The matter contained deals with the Orders Rheiformes, Tinamiformes, Galliformes, Gruiformes, and Columbiformes. The sequence of families and genera within these Orders follows that of Peters' "Birds of the World," though the grouping of the Orders themselves necessarily throws them, and the Orders to follow in future volumes, out of the Peters sequence. Presumably, this departure is to take full advantage of Mr. Conover's extensive knowledge of certain groups: in any event the arrangement will cause no inconvenience of moment to the public for whom the work is intended. The species and subspecies arrangement within the families adheres in the main to that of Peters, but some variation is to be noted here and there. One new name is proposed: *Penelope dabbenei* to replace *Penelope nigrifrons* Dabbene (not of Lesson, 1831).

In spite of the dual authorship, the method of treatment remains the same as in preceding volumes. The bibliographic references are invaluable and the commentaries which occur as footnotes on almost every page constitute at times almost a systematic review of a genus or species, although this the authors modestly deny in their preface. As in previous volumes, too, there is emphasis (it will be called over-emphasis in some quarters) on the use of trinomials for forms which are believed to be representative, whether or not intergradation has been shown. The application of this principle is too controversial a subject to be discussed in a short review. Individual systematists will, as always, follow their own beliefs and certainly none can quarrel with Hellmayr and Conover for so consistently following theirs.

So far as the territory covered by the American Ornithologists' Union "Check-list" is concerned, there seems to be only one basic name change. Transfer of the old, familiar name of the White-faced Glossy Ibis to the Limpkins (p. 301) is to be regretted but there is no alternative under existing rules. The races of the Rock Ptarmigan, *nelsoni*, *kellogae*, and *dixoni* are united (p. 205) under the single name of *americanus* Audubon. However, this and a number of other items relative to the inclusion or rejection of proposed subspecies, and of the reduction to subspecific status of forms now carried as species, are matters which will doubtless receive due consideration from the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature in preparing the next edition of the "Check-list."

Typographically, the work is a product of the Field Museum Press, a fact which makes further comment in this respect superfluous.—A. J. van Rossem.

LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN FLYCATCHERS, LARKS, SWALLOWS, AND THEIR ALLIES. ORDER PASSERIFORMES. By Arthur Cleveland Bent. United States National Museum Bulletin 179, 1942. xi + 555 pp., 70 plates. \$1.00. Supt. of Documents, Washington, D.C.

Persons already familiar with the Bent Life Histories require no reminder of the appearance of new volumes, but newcomers to bird study need to learn of them early if they are to get copies. The accelerated rate of issue of recent numbers brings reassurance that we may soon have the completed series. Already this is becoming the most widely sought work on American birds.

Accommodation to an expanding field of study is shown in part by the tendency to use more help in the preparation. Mr. Bent recognizes that accounts written

<sup>1</sup> For additional reviews see pages 161, 182, and 210.